United Nations S/2012/824

Security Council

Distr.: General
12 November 2012
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 9 November 2012 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the following information:

- In the second half of October 2012, armed terrorist elements began to appear in the two villages of Burayqah and Bi'r Ajam in the demilitarized zone in Qunaytirah governorate, and subsequently, terrorist acts were instituted against the civilian inhabitants of those two villages.
- By early November 2012, those armed terrorist elements had confined the inhabitants of the two above-mentioned villages to their homes and taken control of the area by force.
- In view of the population's demand for the army to intervene, expel the terrorists and restore security for the local inhabitants, there was no option but to undertake a limited military operation for the purpose of restoring the area to its people.
- The United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) command was contacted and put in the picture as regards the situation and the possibility of small forces entering Burayqah and Bi'r Ajam. Some hours later, UNDOF responded, approving a limited military operation to liberate the two villages from the terrorist gangs.
- In the light of that verbal approval, a small military force entered the aforementioned area and pursued the terrorists. The force was reinforced by three tanks that were intended to protect the personnel who were entering the area only by providing them with cover, not by firing their cannons.
- The military operation lasted for several days. It might have been possible to conclude it in one day if the force had been larger, but because of the sensitivity of the area and the commitment of the army to the Agreement on Disengagement, only an extremely small force was used for the operation and great care was exercised to ensure that no fire was directed towards the occupied Golan.

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- At 1700 hours on 8 November 2012, the tanks withdrew to their previous positions outside the demilitarized zone, while law enforcement personnel remained inside Bi'r Ajam in order to follow up the flushing out of certain pockets of armed men. Within 72 hours of that date, the military operation will be completed and the remaining forces will return to the positions they occupied before the operation was undertaken.

- We should like to make it absolutely clear that the military force that undertook the military operation poses no threat to the Agreement on Disengagement. If a few shots fell on the Israeli side, they were either stray bullets or were fired from the weapons of the armed gangs.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative